



Longings in the Year Ahead

by Emily | Jan 14, 2018 | Encouragement | 0 comments



As we begin a new year- what does your heart long for? Acceptance into a uni course? Do you long for a baby of your own to cradle in your arms? Perhaps a husband to do life with? Maybe a promotion in that job you have been tirelessly working in? Or maybe something else? I love a new year- it is so full of possibility and unwritten pages; a potential to discover, to experience, to grow. Yet amongst it all, it is a good time to press pause and take stock. To peel away all the burdens of the year past, the busyness and the noise and in a moment of quiet, to think about what motivates us, what drives us, and to ask ourselves “what are the deepest whisperings of our heart?”

So often I have been known to set new year resolutions- things such as a ‘healthier, more active, less busy me’ often fill the pages of my diary. I set new goals for my own life and for my family. Growing up, my mother modelled this by taking time to pray and consider each of her three girls and think through where she could encourage us, where we had weakness that God could grow us in, and also areas where we were doing really well. These included practical things such as learning an instrument, character-based things such as needing more patience and then as we got older there were relational things too. Over the years these points changed as we changed. Yet I think about the time and care she took for each of her children in prayerfully pausing to consider the motivators she saw in us and the longings that were developing in our heart.

In all these resolutions, or goals, or whatever you want to call them though, we always know that some will be achieved with flying colours and others will go unrealised. Some will give us great joy, others will bring pain or trial. And how do we respond in such circumstances? Do we quickly move on to the next goal, the next project, striving with all that we are to find

satisfaction for our longing in the next desire? Or do we crumble in a heap, feeling like a failure because once again that longing goes unfulfilled? I really believe that when we stop to consider the longings of our heart, when we quiet the noise of life long enough to really recognise what motivates us, we may be surprised at what we find.

As I reflected recently on the past year, God painfully brought to light some grumblings of my heart, some roots of bitterness that had been creeping in. Last year was a busy one for us- it kicked off with a new home, the business took off, our eldest started school, Dave had another year in leadership at his workplace. As moment rolled into days, days rolled into months, months rolled into seasons, I saw that during those moments of busy, seeds of resentment and self-gazing were being sprinkled throughout my heart. All I longed for (and I think I mentioned it at one stage!) was a nice cool beverage on a beach somewhere, reading a book, in the quiet.

Yet God calls to us. He speaks to the longings of our heart and reveals that amongst the lists of health and happiness, of experience and excitement, there is something more precious than jewels and more refreshing than holidays at the beach. In Ecclesiastes 3:11, we read:

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

This verse begins by telling us God makes beautiful in *his* designated time. It isn't due to my designated course for the year ahead, but his. This brings great comfort. We can rest in the knowledge that he will make EVERYTHING beautiful- us included! in his time. This also tells us that he has put eternity into man's heart. What does this mean? It means that in creating

humanity, God placed in us a longing for something more than ephemeral goals and resolutions. He placed in each of us a deep longing for eternity; simply because that is where *we will be with God*. Amongst the gym membership and the IVF schedule, what we long for most deeply is *him*. We long for the water that will quench the longing of our parched soul, the rest where our burdens can be lifted once for all, the moment when we see *in full*.

This verse also tells us “yet so that he cannot find out what God has done...” This is a more confusing part of the passage. What it essentially is saying is that God has placed eternity into our heart, making us long for him and reconciliation with him; but we struggle to understand the enormity of who God is and what he has done. We doubt him because in our humanity, we fail to truly understand him. This God whom we serve flung galaxies into motion, he created the gigantic elephant and the tiniest beetle. God spoke creation into being, he breathed life into the lungs of mankind and he holds our year and life in his hands. He can be trusted.

Like a child learning to ride a bike, their confidence grows as their knowledge about the bike grows. As a child discovers the bike will hold them up and they grow in understanding the mechanics of actually riding a bike, their enjoyment and trust in that bike grows too. Likewise, as we practice trusting, as we seek him with our whole heart, we can grow in our knowledge of him and grow in our trust of him. From generation to generation, God has revealed himself faithful and true.

As you begin your year, may you know that God is *good*; bringing beauty from ashes, growth amongst dry bones. God breathes life into our harried souls. He does it through relationship and word; through connection to the source of life. Our longings for the year ahead will

simply be empty ticks off a never-ending list if we don't recognise our greatest longing, our greatest need that can only be fulfilled in Jesus. And the greatest fulfilment of restored relationship will come in the moment we bow our knees before our God, seeing face to face. When this earth fades away may we be found to have spent our days mining for rubies over chaff; may we have shed whatever kept us distracted so that we could set our hand to a pursuit of *him*. In this upcoming year, may you recognise we were MADE FOR MORE than earthly fulfillments, longings that promise the world but deliver short-term satisfaction.

My prayer for each of us is that as we look to our year ahead, setting goals and planning dates, may we recognise that our Good God already has numbered the days of our year and we can trust him. Fall at his feet today and recommit to spending your year pursuing more than health and wellbeing; spend it pursuing HIM.

I am excited to announce that my first book *Made for More* is being published by Matthias Media. It is due for release sometime toward the end of March/ Early April. If you want to stay up to date with when this hits the shelves of your local Christian Bookstore, or where you can purchase online, can I encourage you to join my Pursuits of God Newsletter, as in it will be the most up-to-date information about the launch and if any pre-orders are available. – Emily

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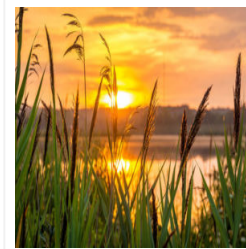
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